

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A scanner for detecting and decoding primary and supplemental bar code labels, comprising:

a laser for generating light;

a video receiver assembly for detecting light patterns produced by a reflection of the light generated by the laser from one or more bar code labels passing within a field of view of the video receiver assembly and producing data based on the light patterns; and

a controller for analyzing the data produced by the video receiver assembly to detect a primary bar code label, the controller being operative upon detection of the primary bar code label to search a database for the bar code represented by the primary bar code label and retrieve a value associated with the bar code, the controller being operative to conduct a search for a supplemental bar code label based on the retrieved value associated with the retrieved bar code, wherein the retrieved value determines the time to be spent searching for the supplemental bar code label.

2. (original) The scanner of claim 1 wherein the controller does not conduct a search for a supplemental label if the bar code represented by the primary bar code label is not found in the database.

3. (original) The scanner of claim 1 wherein the controller conducts a default search if the bar code represented by the primary bar code label is not found in the database.

4. (previously presented) The scanner of claim 1 where the controller is operative to place the scanner in a supplemental label mode for a following scan only, and upon detecting a primary label the controller is operative to search for a supplemental label until a supplemental label is detected or an operator intervenes to abort the search.

5. (original) The scanner of claim 4 wherein the database includes a plurality of bar codes which may be represented by primary bar code labels and wherein the value associated with each of the bar codes reflects a probability that a primary label bearing the bar code will be accompanied by a supplemental label.

6. (original) The scanner of claim 5 wherein the value associated with each of the bar codes represents a degree of difficulty in detecting a supplemental label likely to accompany a primary label bearing the bar code.

7. (original) The scanner of claim 6 wherein processing the UPC label data includes transferring the primary label data to a terminal connected to the scanner, and processing the supplemental label data includes transferring the supplemental label data to the terminal.

8. (original) The scanner of claim 7 wherein the scanner is further operative to provide operator feedback upon detection of a primary label and to provide further operator feedback upon detection of a supplemental label.

9. (original) The scanner of claim 8 wherein the controller is operative to update the database after a search for a supplemental label in order to refine the values associated with the bar codes to reflect the information provided by the results of the search.

10. (original) The scanner of claim 9 wherein the database is received from a central computer serving a plurality of scanners and wherein each of the scanners provides information to update the database in the central computer.

11. (currently amended) A method of bar code detection and decoding, comprising the steps of:

monitoring light entering a video receiver circuit to determine if a primary label has been detected;

upon detecting a primary label, examining a database for bar code information appearing on the primary label;

retrieving a value associated with the bar code information; and

conducting a search for a supplemental label in accordance with the value associated with the bar code information, the retrieved value determining the time to be spent searching for the supplemental bar code label.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein the value associated with the bar code information reflects a probability that the primary label will be accompanied by a supplemental label.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein the value associated with the bar code information reflects a difficulty of detecting a supplemental label likely to accompany the primary label.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of updating the database based on the results of the search.

15. (previously presented) The scanner of claim 1 wherein the retrieved value indicates an expected probability that the primary bar code label is accompanied by the supplemental bar code label.

16. (previously presented) The scanner of claim 15 wherein the time spent searching for the supplemental bar code label increases as the expected probability that the primary bar code label is accompanied by the supplemental bar code increases.

17. (previously presented) The scanner of claim 1 wherein the scanner searches for the supplemental bar code label until the supplemental bar code label is found or until an operator intervenes.

18. (previously presented) The scanner of claim 1 wherein the retrieved value indicates a frequency of occurrence of the supplemental bar code label.

19. (previously presented) The scanner of claim 1 wherein the retrieved value indicates both an expected probability that the primary bar code label is accompanied by the supplemental bar code label and an expected difficulty in detecting the supplemental bar code label.

20. (new) A scanner for detecting and decoding primary and supplemental bar code labels affixed to an item offered for sale, comprising:

a laser for generating light;

a video receiver assembly for detecting light patterns produced by a reflection of the light generated by the laser from one or more bar code labels passing within a field of view of the video receiver assembly and producing data based on the light patterns; and

a controller for analyzing the data produced by the video receiver assembly to detect a primary bar code label affixed to an item offered for sale, the controller being operative upon detection of the primary bar code label to search a database for the bar code represented by the primary bar code label and retrieve a value associated with the bar code, the controller being operative to conduct a search for a supplemental bar code label affixed to the item offered for sale based on the retrieved value associated with the retrieved bar code, wherein the retrieved value determines the time to be spent searching for the supplemental bar code label.